

REMARKS

Applicants acknowledge the indicated allowability of the subject matter of Claims 2-3 and 8-10, as set forth in paragraph 7 of the Office Action. In addition, Claim 12, which depends from Claim 8, has been rejected only on minor formal grounds. As indicated below, however, Applicants respectfully submit that Claims 2, 3 and 8-10 are allowable in their present dependent form, and that Claim 12 as amended is allowable as well.

Claim 1 has been objected to, and Claim 12 rejected, under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, based on certain formal issues cited by the Examiner. In response to these grounds of objection and rejection, Applicants have amended the claims in a manner which addresses and is believed to resolve each of the cited formal issues. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this ground of rejection are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 4-7 and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as unpatentable over Worst (U.S. Patent No. 4,489,242) in view of known portable compact disc players. However, for the reasons discussed below, Applicants believe that the latter claims distinguish over the Worst reference, whether considered by itself or in combination with a compact disc player. Accordingly, Applicants have amended the claims only to address the formal issues cited by the Examiner. In addition, a new Claim 18 has been added, which is directed to

a "component part of a motor vehicle" having an isolated, self contained and dedicated power supply for an electrical device situated in the door.

Both the present invention, and the Worst reference are described in detail in Applicants' Remarks which accompanied the amendment filed October 17, 2001. These comments will not be repeated here, except to note that a significant feature of the invention resides in the provision of a dedicated fuel cell which is collocated with a load element in a structural component of a vehicle, and is isolated from other power supply systems in the vehicle. Claim 1, for example, recites that at least one fuel cell system is "electrically isolated from the other power generators of the power supply system, and is dedicated to supplying electricity to an assigned electric consuming device", and that the fuel cell is "collocated with the assigned electric consuming device on or in a structural subassembly of the vehicle". Similarly, proposed new Claim 18 recites that the fuel cell system is isolated and self contained in a component part of the vehicle system, being collocated therewith an electrically activated device for which it constitutes a dedicated power supply.

The Worst reference differs from the present invention as defined in Claim 17 in that it discloses a central integrated power supply system, in which electric power is provided by a single battery, or dual batteries to a plurality of vehicle electric systems via a wiring harness 16, as depicted in Figures 1 and 2. It contains nothing which teaches or suggests the collocation of a dedicated power supply together with a load which it services, isolated in a structural subassembly of the vehicle, or in a component part of the vehicle. In regard to

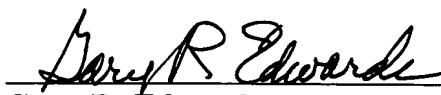
this feature of the invention, the Office Action notes at page 3 that the batteries (19a, 19b) are capable of being collocated with the accessories on or in a component of the vehicle, and that "the device, is also capable of being preassembled as a subassembly." Assuming that this is so, the fact that this reference is capable of containing a feature of the claimed invention, or could have disclosed the claimed invention does not alter the fact that it does not disclose a system in which a dedicated power supply is isolated and collocated as claimed.

Paragraph 6 of the Office Action also cites known compact disc players, stating that it would have been obvious to modify the system of Worst to include a preassembled portable compact disc player with an isolated fuel cell. However, Applicants respectfully submit that a combination of a compact disc player and the Worst reference would in no way replicate the present invention as defined in Claims 1 and 17, for the reasons set forth above. In addition, nothing in either Worst, or in the cited generic compact disc player teaches or suggests the isolation of a fuel cell as such in a structural subassembly of a vehicle, together with a load element which is energized by the fuel cell.

In light of the foregoing remarks, this application should be in condition for allowance, and early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested. If there are any questions regarding this amendment or the application in general, a telephone call to the undersigned would be appreciated since this should expedite the prosecution of the application for all concerned.

If necessary to effect a timely response, this paper should be considered as a petition for an Extension of Time sufficient to effect a timely response, and please charge any deficiency in fees or credit any overpayments to Deposit Account No. 05-1323 (Docket #225/48391).

Respectfully submitted,



Gary R. Edwards
Registration No. 31,824

CROWELL & MORING, LLP
Intellectual Property Group
P.O. Box 14300
Washington, DC 20044-4300
Telephone No.: (202) 624-2500
Facsimile No.: (202) 628-8844
GRE:kms
(CAM 38738.678)

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A decentralized power supply system for a vehicle, comprising at least one fuel cell system and other power generators, wherein:

the at least one fuel [sell] cell system is electrically isolated from the other power generators of the power supply system, and is dedicated to supplying electricity to an assigned electric consuming device; and

the at least one fuel cell system is collocated with the assigned electric consuming device on or in a structural subassembly of the vehicle.

12. (Amended) A vehicle having a power supply system according to Claim 8, wherein the fuel [tank] storage device is exchangeable or fillable outside the vehicle or the component.